

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-8 have been cancelled.

9. (Currently amended) A process for production of sodium borohydride; said process comprising steps of:

(a) combining a boric acid ester precursor and an alcohol, ROH; wherein R represents alkyl having at least three carbon atoms, aryl or aralkyl; to produce a boric acid ester, B(OR)₃;

(b) combining sodium, aluminum and hydrogen to produce sodium aluminum hydride;

(c) combining ~~in a hydrocarbon solvent~~ the boric acid ester and the sodium aluminum hydride to produce sodium borohydride and Al(OR)₃ and separating sodium borohydride and Al(OR)₃ by dissolving Al(OR)₃ in a hydrocarbon solvent; and

(d) combining the Al(OR)₃ produced in step (c) and sulfuric acid to produce alum and ROH;

wherein ROH produced in step (d) is recycled to step (a).

10. (Original) The process of claim 9 in which R is phenyl.